

Site-Specific Advisory Boards Your Voice in Government Decision-Making

*"...Boards have helped establish public trust and confidence in the
Environmental Management program
And the Department Of Energy."*

When stakeholders want to share information and become involved in the environmental decision-making process, the cleanup activities at Federal facilities benefit. The Department of Energy (DOE) continues its commitment to involving stakeholders early and often in decision-making regarding the nuclear weapons complex cleanup program. This involvement helps agencies make cost-efficient and environmentally sound decisions, which lead to faster, safer cleanups.

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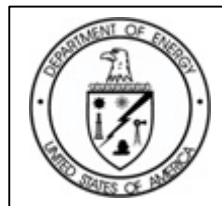
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Oak Ridge Site, SSAB Meeting

**Involving Communities in
DOE Cleanup Decision-making**



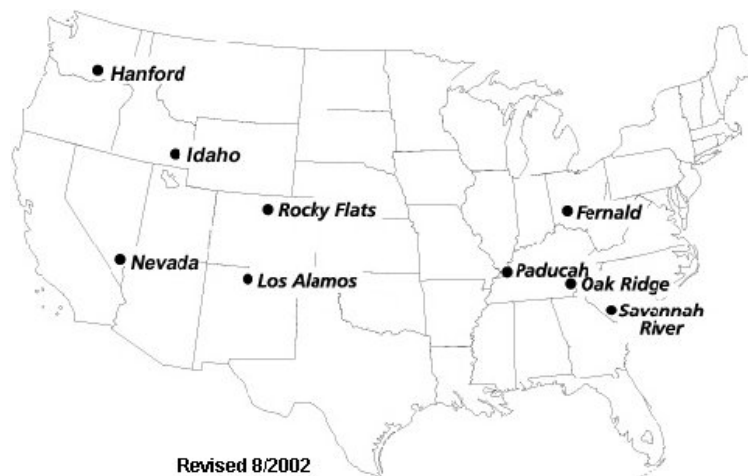
**Office of Environmental Management
Office of Intergovernmental and Public
Accountability**

What Are Site-Specific Advisory Boards?

Site-specific Advisory Boards were developed to involve stakeholders more directly in DOE cleanup decisions. While only one Federal Advisory Committee Act-chartered Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EM SSAB) exists, 9 local site Boards chartered under the EM SSAB umbrella charter have been organized at the following DOE sites: Fernald, Hanford, Idaho, Los Alamos, Nevada, Oak Ridge, Paducah, Rocky Flats, and Savannah River.

Where Are the Local Site Boards?

As the map below indicates, local Site Advisory Boards have been established in the states of Washington, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and Ohio.



What Do the Local Site Boards Do?

The local site Boards provide the Department with policy information, advice, and recommendations concerning environmental restoration, waste management, and technology development activities. They provide input and recommendations on difficult and sometimes controversial national and site-specific issues such as future use, risk management, cleanup levels, economic development, and budget prioritization activities. Since their inception, local site Boards have helped establish public trust and confidence in the EM program and DOE.

Who Serves On the Local Site Boards?

Local site Board membership, which reflects a full diversity of views, cultures, and demographics from affected communities and regions, is composed primarily of people who are directly affected by site cleanup activities. Members include stakeholders from local governments, Tribal Nations, environmental and civic groups, labor organizations, universities, industry, and other interested parties. DOE, the Environmental Protection Agency, and State governments serve as ex-officio members on the local boards.

What Are Local Site Board Responsibilities?

- Submitting consensus advice and recommendations to DOE on key EM issues.
- Representing and communicating the diversity of community views in their discussions.
- Keeping the public informed on key issues, upcoming decisions, and board recommendations.

DOE's obligations to the local site boards include:

- Keeping the boards informed about key issues and upcoming decisions.
- Requesting recommendations well in advance of DOE deadlines.
- Considering and responding in a timely manner to all Board recommendations.
- Providing adequate funding for administrative and technical support.

How Are The Local Site Boards Evaluated?

DOE's Office of Environmental Management periodically conducts an independent evaluation of the local site Boards. This evaluation may consist of a formal survey of selected individuals, including Board members, ex-officio members, members of the general public; site visits and discussions with SSAB members and others; and/or a review of recommendations, reports, and meeting minutes submitted by local site Boards. In addition, at the end of each fiscal year, local site Boards are requested to conduct self-evaluations of progress made during the previous year.

Are They Working?

Since 1994, the local site Boards have met numerous times, providing DOE with hundreds of recommendations. Many of these recommendations have proven highly effective in redirecting EM efforts in ways that have saved taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

- At *Fernald*, the local site Advisory Board recommended an accelerated cleanup plan, coupled with less-stringent (industrial) cleanup standards and on-site disposal of low-level radioactive waste; recommendations that could save DOE over \$2 billion. As Fernald moves closer to closure, the Board continues to work on issues of interest to stakeholders, such as activities pertaining to cleanup and future use of the Fernald site.
- At *Hanford*, the advisory board has joined the Richland Operations Office and the Office of River Protection in their mutual focus on accelerated cleanup -- ensuring that a quality cleanup is completed as effectively and efficiently as possible. Focus on acceleration continues with the board's interest in and anticipated advice on groundwater strategies and tank waste technology. The board's Exposure Scenario Task Force has taken the first steps toward defining end-points for cleanup, and provided a perspective on risk assessments and exposure scenarios for the Columbia River corridor and the central plateau portions of the Hanford Site.
- At the *Idaho National Engineering & Environmental Laboratory*, the Board recommended that DOE use the most efficient and cost-effective method available for remediating ground water contaminated with hazardous chemicals — resulting in a savings of more than \$6.5 million.
- At *Savannah River*, the SRS Citizens Advisory Board (SRS CAB) has assisted in accelerating the closure of the Old Radioactive Waste Burial Ground (ORWBG), the highest risk site in the Savannah River Site's (SRS) Environmental Restoration Program. With the CAB's input and recommendations, SRS has proposed a final remedy for this waste unit that combines remedies from three nearby radioactive waste basins with the closure of the ORWBG.
- At *Paducah*, waste disposition has been one of the Citizens Advisory Board's primary focuses. The CAB has performed in-depth studies on a potential on-site disposal facility, ultimately aiding in the selection of its future location. The CAB continues to stay abreast of the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility study and currently is focused on the on-site sanitary landfill and a myriad of regulatory issues. It is also preparing comments on actions resulting from the Accelerated Cleanup Plan.

- At *Oak Ridge*, the Oak Ridge Site-Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) submitted its Comprehensive Closure Proposal identifying two projects for accelerated closure. Its proposed disposition of low-level radioactive waste will produce an \$8 - \$9 million savings. In another project, two high school classes wrote summaries of the *Oak Ridge Reservation Stakeholders Reports on Stewardship* as a way to educate other students about stewardship with a set of “student friendly” documents.

How Can You Get Involved?

Advisory Board meetings serve as a two-way exchange between members of the public and DOE. They always include a public comment and question/answer period through which you can voice your issues or submit written questions. DOE responds to the comments and considers them during decision-making.

Department of Energy Contacts

The pages that follow contain a comprehensive list of Federal, SSAB, and administrative contacts and SSAB offices when you write or call the site nearest you for information about meetings and activities.

SSAB Federal Coordinators

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Rocky Flats

Vacant

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SSAB Offices and Administrative Contacts

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**For more information about the
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Consult the World Wide Web at
<http://www.em.doe.gov/public/ssab/>**